

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #0192 0370633
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 060633Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3173
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 8083
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5336
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9204
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5230
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS SEOUL 000192

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/PD FOR SWALKER, EAP/P, EAP/K
STATE PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAX/ITP SCHEIKH
STATE PASS USTR FOR RCASSIDY
USDOC FOR 4430/IEP/OPB/EAP/JDONIUS
TREASURY FOR OASIA/MGREWE
CINCPAC FOR J-74

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [US](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IN SEOUL

Subject: Media Reaction; Seoul

Iraq

"A Future for Iraq"

Senior Journalist Kim Young-hie opined in right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo (02/06): "There are four reasons to believe that the recent local elections in Iraq bode well for the country's future. First, the Sunnis had boycotted the 2005 elections, but this time many of them voted, helping to find a balance in the distribution of power. Second, Islamic political parties used to be strong and secular political parties weak, but this year it was the other way around, indicating the diminishing influence of Iran, which supported them, and of al-Qaeda. Third, on the day of the election, the Iraqi army and police, not the U.S. military, headed security, and there was no major violence. Fourth, young candidates, who have never sought asylum abroad, ran in the election, a good sign for the future leadership of the nation. However, there is still a very long way to go. Iraq is surrounded by Iran, Syria and Jordan, and Jordan shares a border with Israel. Because of Iraq's geopolitical location, the U.S.' Iraq policy is directly linked to its instinct to protect Israel, and Iraqi issues are intertwined with issues of the Middle East region as a whole. Therefore, if there is no progress in negotiations for peace in Palestine, on Iran's nuclear program, or in talks between Syria and Israel on handing over the Golan Heights, no one knows how long it will take for the seed of peace in Iraq to sprout and bear fruit."

Global Economy

"Financial Protectionism Could Bring Second Crisis"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (02/06): "The U.S. and Europe are extending financial aid to their banks on condition that they boost loans to domestic businesses. With the global credit crunch unresolved, the only way to boost domestic lending is to cut back on international loans. That means cash flow in the global financial markets will be further constricted, leading to a decrease in trade and making it more difficult for the global economy to recover."

"Even Though 'Buy America' Provisions Have Softened"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (02/06): "The U.S has only watered down some of the 'Buy America' provisions in its economic

stimulus bill. Furthermore, under this economic crisis, most countries are facing increasingly intense political pressure to protect their own businesses and jobs. In this regard, similar disputes and conflicts will, in all likelihood, resurface at any time and anywhere."

Stephens